

*Fairbank,  
Maslin,  
Maullin,  
Metz &  
Associates*

**FM3**

*Public Opinion Research  
& Strategy*

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Curtis Below and Miranda Everitt  
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates

RE: Key Findings from 2017 Alameda Community Survey

DATE: August 24, 2017

---

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed 600 telephone interviews with City of Alameda residents to assess their views on life in Alameda, as well as City government and the City's budget.<sup>1</sup>

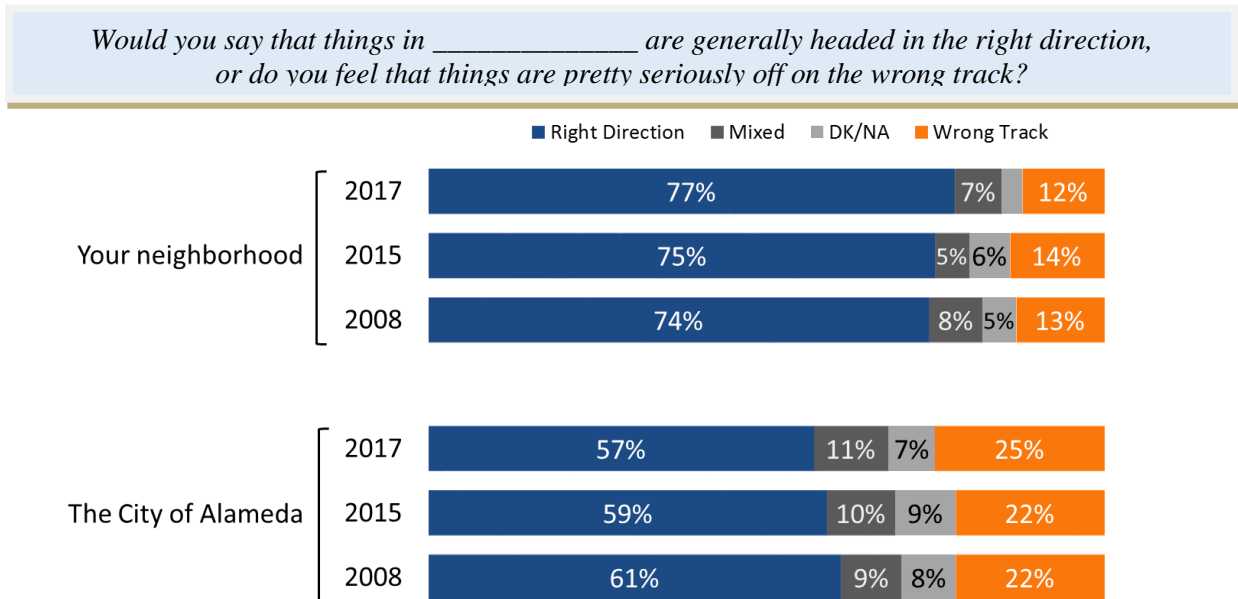
The survey found that Alamedans had generally positive views of life in the City, and especially positive views of life in their particular neighborhoods. They were, however, concerned about the cost of housing and traffic. Public safety and parks were rated quite highly, while there is room for improvement on street maintenance. Notably, more than two in five said they are willing to pay more to improve repairs to streets, sidewalks and storm drains.

Key specific findings from the survey include:

- **Respondents were optimistic about the City, and even more so about their own neighborhoods.** Survey respondents were asked if they felt things in the City and the own neighborhoods were, "generally headed in the right direction" or "pretty seriously off on the wrong track." As shown in **Figure 1**, solid majorities expressed positive sentiments about both the overall City and their own neighborhoods, perceptions that were quite similar to those measured in 2008 and 2015 surveys. However, they appeared more optimistic about their own neighborhoods (77% "right direction") than the City overall (57% "right direction").

---

<sup>1</sup> **Methodology:** From July 20-23, 2017, FM3 completed 600 live telephone interviews (on both landlines and cell phones) with likely November 2018 voters in the City of Alameda. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is +/-4.0% at the 95% confidence level, and +/-5.7% for half-samples; margins of error for population subgroups within the sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.

**FIGURE 1: General Impressions of Life in Alameda**

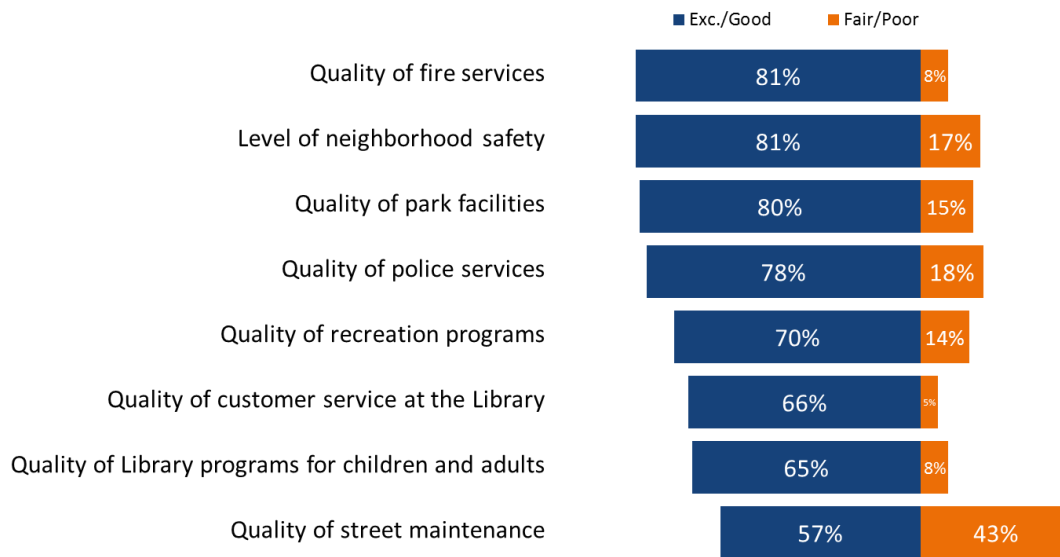
- Housing costs were clearly the most pressing issue facing Alameda.** Survey respondents were presented with a number of challenges facing the City and asked to indicate how serious of a problem they felt each to be. Two issues stood out, with three in five or more indicating they were “extremely” or “very” serious problems – the cost of housing (73%) and traffic congestion on local streets and roads (60%) (**Figure 2**). Concerns about housing costs and traffic congestion topped the list, along with climate change (49%) and sea-level rise (42%).

**FIGURE 2: Seriousness of Perceived Problems Facing Alameda**  
 (% Rating Each an Extremely or Very Serious Problem)

Problem	2008	2015	2017
The cost of housing	55%	69%	<b>73%</b>
Traffic and congestion on local streets and roads	27%	47%	<b>60%</b>
Climate change	--	--	<b>49%</b>
Too much growth and development	--	38%	<b>47%</b>
Sea-level rise	--	--	<b>42%</b>
A lack of parking in commercial districts	23%	24%	<b>34%</b>
Lack of preparedness for disasters such as floods or earthquakes	--	--	<b>34%</b>
Waste and inefficiency in local government	43%	18%	<b>23%</b>
The amount people pay in City taxes	32%	15%	<b>26%</b>
Crime	28%	9%	<b>17%</b>

- **Respondents were satisfied with most City services, particularly public safety and park facilities.** Many specific services – most of which align with the City’s officially adopted performance metrics – were presented to survey respondents, and they were asked to indicate whether they think the City is doing an “excellent, good, only fair, or poor job in providing that service.” Nearly all the services presented were viewed as “excellent” or “good” by majorities of respondents, with more than three-quarters saying as much for fire services, park facilities, neighborhood safety, and police services (**Figure 3**). Only the quality of street maintenance yielded significant numbers of respondents (43%) who felt the service was “only fair” or “poor” (28% “only fair” and 15% “poor”).

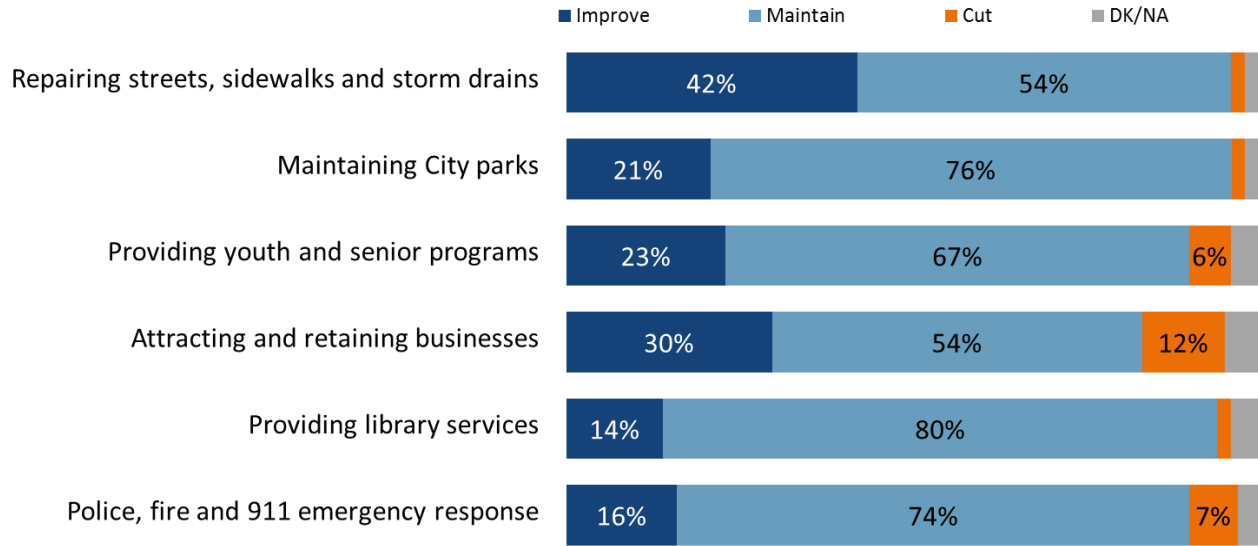
**FIGURE 3: Perceptions of Key City Services**



- **Significant percentages indicate they would pay more to improve street, sidewalk and storm drain repairs.** Respondents were also asked whether they think cuts should be made to a service to help balance the budget, it should be maintained at current levels, or whether they would be willing to pay additional taxes to see it improved. **Figure 4** on the next page shows for the most part, strong majorities said they would like to simply maintain the listed services. For example, 84 percent would like library services to be maintained at current levels, and 78 percent said the same of City parks. However, more than two in five (42%) say they would pay more to improve repairs to streets, sidewalks and storm drains – far above any other priority tested.

There was very little respondents would like to see cut, with a bit more than one in ten (12%) saying they would cut attracting and retaining businesses (though 30 percent would pay more for this service).

**FIGURE 4: Community Budget Priorities**



Taken together, these results suggest that Alamedans were generally satisfied with life in the City and the services the City provides, though they were quite concerned about the cost of housing and traffic congestion. Respondents were willing to pay more through a local funding measure such as an Alameda sales tax or infrastructure bond to improve the City’s maintenance of streets, sidewalks and storm drains. In addition, Alamedans did not want cuts to any part of their budget, preferring instead to see services maintained or improved.